

**Where is your treasure?:**

**Spiritual Focus in a Material Age**

**The Reverend Dr. Catharine Randall Christ Church Middle Haddam (August 8, 2010 Lk 12: 32-40)**

**If suddenly your house were to catch on fire, what would you save? Seriously. Have you thought about this? You wake in the middle of the night, your heart pounding, a strange smell in your nostrils, heat smothering you, and you realize that you've got 5 minutes, at best, to get out. What would you save?**

**Well, if you still have children, let's hope you get them out first! But, if you could, what possessions, which material objects, would you take with you? Think about it for a moment. [pause] A stash of cash? Your grandfather's watch? Those photos of your daughter when she was little? A special book or piece of art? An heirloom of some sort?**

**"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys -- nor fire -- . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."**

**Could there be a Kingdom after a fire? After everything you loved was lost?**

**But if what you TRULY love is not material possessions, if your home is, as Scripture says, elsewhere, if your treasures are laid up for you in Heaven, then the Kingdom of God is at hand here and now.**

How may we do this? How may we shift our focus from materiality in this capitalism-dominated age, the age of consumerism and conspicuous consumption and institutionalized obsolescence that keeps us buying, trashing, replacing, dumping, hoarding ...

Where is your treasure? What if we ARE, as the saying goes, are spiritual beings having an earthly experience, and all these things, this dross, this clutter is blocking the channels to our connection with God?

Mr. Clutter drives a big van around Santa Fe, New Mexico. Randy and I sat next to his van at a stop light a few weeks ago while we were on vacation. Mr. Clutter goes into people's home and gets paid to help them organize, throw things out, dispossess themselves. Presumably they are unable to do this on their own, despite being able-bodied, free and over 21! Psychologists tell you that a healthy approach to your closet will free your mind to work better. They advise you to throw away anything that you haven't worn in the past 6 months – or give it to Good Will. Clear the decks. Store up your treasure on heaven, not your trash on earth. Toss it out to make space for the Spirit.

Practice random acts of kindness, instructs one bumper sticker. Give money away anonymously. Try it. It's not nuts. I've done it. It's amazingly liberating. And, parenthetically, it's true that what goes around, comes around. The New Testament tells us to give now, out of our abundance, so that, in our time of need, others will help to shoulder our burden.

What are your non-negotiables? [pause] What do you REALLY need to survive? Not things, but attitudes, beliefs, convictions, ways of being ... Kindness, compassion, being non-judgmental, and ability to truly trust in God's provisions ... Write them down. Does your list change over time? Are there some to which you aspire? Pray for those goals to be realized. Jesus tells us that whatever we ask in His name, He will grant us. I believe He will. I used to be a shy person—yes, I know, everyone cracks up when I say that. But I was. For ten years I prayed specifically for Jesus to draw me into community. NOW look at me!!! You all are the answer to my prayer. Don't tell ME He doesn't work miracles. Don't TRY to tell me He doesn't answer prayer!

What if you knew today would be your last day? [pause] What would you do? Who would you see? I've experienced that, too. I'll tell you about it some time. What I'll tell you right now is that, on June 17, 1982, when my doctors told me I probably would not survive the night, I learned what freedom was. Try to practice living every day as though it were that, possibly last, day. It really helps you get your priorities straight. And never forget to love. And to tell that love.

Where is your treasure? There your heart will be also.

Money, stocks, bonds, houses, all these are great. You need some practical means of getting through this life. But, when the chips are down, when the fire's at the top of the stairs, and the doctors hold out little hope, where is your treasure? Can you put your hand on it? Pick it up? Take it with you? Or do you carry it in your heart?

**“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”**

**Travel light along the Way. And He will light your way.**

**Amen+**